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SUBJECT: IRANIAN DIPLOMAT SOUNDS OUT THE BRITS

CLASSIFIED BY: A/POL MINISTER COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS. REASON: 1.5 (B)(D).

1. (S) ON JUNE 17, UK EMBASSY POL COUNS FRANCIS CAMPBELL (STRICTLY PROTECT) BRIEFED POLOFF ON HIS MEETING THE PREVIOUS DAY WITH IRANIAN EMBASSY SECOND SECRETARY ALI GHOLAMPOUR. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN CAMPBELL'S OFFICE IN THE UK EMBASSY.

2. (S) ACCORDING TO GHOLAMPOUR, IRAN IS "THANKFUL" THAT COALITION FORCES HAVE REMOVED SADDAM AND THE THREAT HE POSED TO REGIONAL SECURITY, BUT DOES NOT WANT COALITION TROOPS TO REMAIN "ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY" IN IRAQ. THE FOREIGN MILITARY TROOPS ACT AS A "MAGNET FOR TERRORISTS" AND THOSE DETERMINED TO DESTABILIZE THE REGION, ACCORDING TO GHOLAMPOUR. HE DID NOT COMMENT ON CAMPBELL'S REMINDER THAT THE COALITION HAD NO INTEREST IN REMAINING IN IRAQ ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY, BUT WOULD STAY UNTIL THE JOB THERE WAS FINISHED.

3. (S) CAMPBELL SAID THAT GHOLAMPOUR WAS "VISIBLY UPSET" OVER THE WAY IRAN WAS BEING TREATED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN REGARD TO ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM, WHICH IS "STRICTLY CIVILIAN." IRAN WANTS TO MOVE CLOSER TO THE WEST AND WANTS EUROPEAN BUSINESSES, ESPECIALLY IN THE ENERGY SECTOR, TO INVEST IN IRAN. THE HARD LINE REPRESENTED BY THE US AND MOST RECENT IAEA BOG REPORT WAS PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THE FUNDAMENTALISTS IN TEHERAN. IRAN HAS A CHOICE, GHOLAMPOUR CONTINUED; IT COULD MOVE SLOWLY TOWARDS "WESTERNIZATION" OR, IF FORCED, "BECOME LIKE NORTH KOREA." HE WONDERED WHETHER THE US HAD AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE IN THIS APPROACH, HOPING TO PAINT IRAN IN SUCH A NEGATIVE LIGHT THAT IT COULD JUSTIFY AN "IRAQ STYLE" ARMED INTERVENTION. CAMPBELL NOTED THAT GIVEN IC FOCUS ON IRAN, GOING DOWN THE SAME PATH AS NORTH KOREA WOULD NOT BE IN IRAN'S BEST INTERESTS.

4. (S) GHOLAMPOUR WAS ALSO NEGATIVE ON THE GME INITIATIVE, NOT SO MUCH FOR ITS GOALS BUT FOR ITS METHODS. DESPITE CAMPBELL'S EXPLANATION THAT THE GME WAS A PROJECT TO ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST CHANGE FROM WITHIN, HE INSISTED THAT THE GME WAS AN ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE CHANGE ON A REGION THAT "WAS NOT READY FOR WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY." IRAN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO MAKE PROGRESS "IN ITS OWN WAY," GHOLAMPOUR SAID.

5. (S) CAMPBELL LEARNED AFTER THE MEETING THAT GHOLAMPOUR HAD MET WITH THE FRENCH EMBASSY'S POLITICAL FIRST SECRETARY AND HAD MADE SIMILAR POINTS. CAMPBELL'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT GHOLAMPOUR MIGHT BE MAKING THE ROUNDS WITH THE EU-3, PERHAPS EVEN AT THE SUGGESTION OF THE ITALIAN MFA, IN AN ATTEMPT TO TRY TO MOVE EU-3 GOVERNMENTS TOWARDS A "MORE ITALIAN" APPROACH TOWARDS IRAN, I.E. TAKING A TOUGH LINE ON ANY NUCLEAR ARMS PROGRAM BUT ENGAGING TEHERAN ON OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES AND KEEPING LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN. NOTE: POLOFF WILL FOLLOW UP WITH FRENCH AND GERMAN EMBASSY CONTACTS. END NOTE.

6. (S) SOME BIO INFORMATION: CAMPBELL SAID THAT GHOLAMPOUR APPEARED TO BE IN HIS THIRTIES. THIS IS HIS FIRST POSTING ABROAD - HE PREVIOUSLY WORKED IN THE IRANIAN MFA'S NONPROLIFERATION BUREAU. HE INDICATED TO CAMPBELL THAT HE HAD "SOME TECHNICAL TRAINING" IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY BUT WAS NOT SPECIFIC ON HIS DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE. HE IS MARRIED WITH TWO CHILDREN AND HAS A TOURIST VISA APPLICATION PENDING WITH THE UK EMBASSY IN ROME, WHICH THE CONSULAR OFFICER IN CHARGE OF HIS CASE HAS FORWARDED TO LONDON FOR EVALUATION (STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR SUCH CASES).

7. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

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